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JESUS: MYTH OR HISTORY?

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of the Historicity of Jesus, in more or less bold form, is an old one. Hermann S. Reimarus (1694-1768) recognized the person of Jesus but attributed the birth of Christianity to the imagination of His disciples. Such names as Reinhard, Opitz, JaRobi, Herder, representing a half-developed rationalism in Germany in the last half of the eighteenth, and first quarter of the nineteenth century, suggest efforts to supplement the life of the traditional concept of Jesus and present, as an antidote for the spirituality of Jesus, a view of his human life.

Among the French rationalists there are Volney, who suggests that the entire Gospel tradition represents an astral myth, and Dupuis, who writes, "Jesus is still less man than God. He is, like all the deities that men have adored, the sun; Christianity is a solar myth."(1)

Karl F. Bahrdt (1741-1792) and Karl H. Venturini (1768-1849), recognizing the lack of connection of events in the Gospels' life of Jesus, wrote fictitious "Lives." Heinrich Paulus (1739-1851) wrote a consistently rationalistic Life of Jesus. Karl Hase (1800-1890), in his reconstruction

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(1) M. Goguel, Jesus the Nazarene, p. 7.

of the life of Jesus on a purely historical basis, describes all the incidents in which angels figure, and the miracles at the time of Jesus' death, as "mythical touches."

To be sure, these conclusions inconvenienced some of the men in their search for professorships. However, their thoughts, with their significant implications, appear to have had no immediate effect, and gave no sustained cause for alarm among the contemporary opponents.

To David Friederich Strauss goes the credit of precipitating the issue. One hundred years ago, his Life of Jesus fell like a bomb in the lap of traditional dogmatism.(2) Embittered by the tyrannical method of dogma which had thrown about Jesus the garb of secrecy and supernaturalism and lost his humanity in the idea of the "supra-mundane Christ,"(3) Strauss sought to picture Jesus "as truly and purely human, to strip from him the robes of splendor with which he had been apparelled, and clothe him once more with the coarse garments in which he had walked in Galilee."(4)

The young man might have gained popular favor had he stopped with this endeavor. However, as a student of the Hegelian School, he was driven to a mythical theory by the dialectic method. In the application of the formula--Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis--in his study of the Gospels, he consid-

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(2) Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet, Tübingen: I, 1835.
(3) Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 3.
(4) Ibid., p. 80.

ered separately each incident of the life of Jesus; "first as supernaturally explained, and then as rationally explained, and the one explanation was refuted by the other."(5) As a result, many inexplicable elements, in the whole or part of the narrative, became apparent. These elements might be, and were explained by the traditional dogmatists by referring them to the supernatural. This was impossible for Strauss' naturalistic tendencies, so he dubbed the parts,and, too often the whole narrative, as mythical.

The young scholar paid dearly for his convictions. In the effort that followed to silence the twenty-seven year old offender, his opponents excluded him from public teaching, tore him from natural relationships and drove him into unnatural ones; and forced him into a life of loneliness.

There were other writers, contemporaneous with and following Strauss, who touched upon our problem. But their work, with the possible exception of Renan's, caused only quiet ripples on the sea of controversy. Charles C. Hennell wrote in 1840, An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity," which was prefaced by Strauss. August F. Gfrörer wrote his Critical History of Primitive Christianity. Ludwig Noack published in 1876, The History of Jesus on the Basis of a free Historical Inquiry regarding the Gospel and the Gospels. Ernest Renan's La Vie de Jésus, given to the French world in 1865, popularized the critical study of Jesus. Albert Schweitzer discusses at

(5) Ibid., p. 80.

length Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, Keim, Schenkel, Hase, and B. Weiss who wrote "Liberal" lives of Jesus.(6) W. Wrede renders the historical reality of Jesus practically unnecessary. On the grounds of the uncertainty of the Gospel tradition and the absence of all external testimony, Matthes, Naber, Pierson, and Van Loon, of the radical Dutch School, decided against the Historicity of Jesus.(7)

Bruno Bauer(8) and Albert Kalthoff(9) looked for the sources of Christianity, not in a single person, but in the Judea-Graeco-Roman life of the first and second centuries. Peter Jensen(10) discovered vague similarities in content and form between the career of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament and the mythical life of Gilgamesch in the Babylonian legend. It would appear that Kalthoff and Jensen did not at first deliberately plan to disprove the Historicity of Jesus. The negative conclusions of the first writer were based on a study of the social and economic sources of Gospel times, while the Assyriologist arrived at his unique negative theory through a study of the Gilgamesch Epos. So we are more especially interested in the later writers who deliberately began their thesis with a negative assumption.

The most prominent and influential of these later

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(6) Ibid., pp. 193-221.
(7) M. Goguel, p. 15, JN
(8) Kritik der Evangelischen Geschichte der Synoptiker, Leipzig, 1841-42.
(9) Das Christus Problem. Grundlinien zu einer Sozialtheologie, Leipzig, 1902.
(10) Das Gilgamesch-Epos in der Weltlitteratur, I. Strassburg, 1906.

writers are J. M. Robertson,[11] William Smith,[12] and Arthur Drews.[13] Their general assumption is that Jesus never lived, nor could have lived, as an historic person. He was not born, he did not work, suffer, meet and overcome real obstacles and temptations, nor did he die. He was an ideal figure. Possibly a creation of the spiritual longings and desires of the community or an embellishment of some old nature-myths. His was rather the name of a god "who was worshiped in certain circles of the Jewish Dispora and for whom a human and symbolical history was invented--a religious myth clothed in legend."[14]

This bold assumption gives rise to a very vexing problem: How shall we account for the origin of Christianity if there were no historic personage to give it impetus? In this introduction it will suffice to give the commonly accepted solution of Smith, Drews, and Robertson, as it has been summarized by Shirley J. Case:[15] Christianity is fundamentally a loan from the contemporary heathen religions. The salvation idea of Christianity is only the result of the early community's borrowing and recasting of the belief in a redeeming divinity found in ancient faiths, secret cults, and nature myths. The origin of Christianity was not in Gospel times but in the pre-Christian era. Christianity was probably the climax of an

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(11) Christianity and Mythology, London, 1900; Pagan Christs, London, 1903.
(12) Ecce Deus. Die urchristliche Lehre des reingöttlichen Jesu, Jena, 1911.
(13) Die Christusmythe, Jena, 1909.
(14) James Mackinnon, The Historic Jesus, Preface XV.
(15) The Historicity of Jesus, pp. 91-94.

evolution and inner development within Judaism. Jesus is merely a rehabilitation of Joshua, who is said to be originally the deified personification of the salvation-concept of the Hebrews. Therefore, there was a pre-Christian Jesus.....a fictitious Joshua-Jesus character.

So, just as some critical scholars are beginning to see a closer relationship between the "Christ of Paul" and the "Jesus of the Synoptics," the dust-covered darts of Strauss, with their poisonous heads, are finding ready targets in the minds of our three modern mythologists. As a result we again face the most acute problem: Jesus, Myth or History. Did the person of Jesus, in his humanity, walk among the hills of Galilee? Did he teach and train twelve men to continue in his steps? Is there any history in the wilderness experience, the transfiguration, the passion week, and the cross?

The problem is further complicated by the meagerness of the facts and data. The Synoptics do not offer a biography of Jesus. The books appear to be very methodically put together. The effort to assemble and classify the acts and narratives of Jesus is evident. Critical scholars in the majority agree that most incidents and narratives cover but a three-year period of public ministry and they are not presented chronologically. The early life and youth of Jesus are but veiled mysteries.

The above conclusions give rise to the very pointed question, "Are there historical proofs of value for the actual existence of Jesus?" Robertson, Smith, and Drews, by means of

unhistorical methods, contend that there are no historical proofs of value for Jesus' actual existence, and, therefore, attribute to Him only mythical existence. These myth-advocates dispose of all extra-Biblical references to Jesus by labeling them "late-interpolations." The Pauline evidence is considered of no historic value by either making Paul a myth or claiming for him knowledge of a "Spiritual Christ." The entire Synoptic evidence is found to be but a collection of legends, stories to support the myth. Indifferent to the conclusions of modern scholarship, the myth-contenders refuse to recognize the accepted Pauline epistles and the Synoptic Gospels.

The primary end and aim of this thesis is a critical review. In chapters II and III, it is the writer's purpose to review the theories of six representative exponents of Jesus as a myth. Chapter IV is a summary of the various lines of attack made by the opposition on the Historicity of Jesus. Chapters V, VI, VII, VIII, are given to a survey of the evidence for the Historicity of Jesus: The significant extra-Biblical evidence is presented in Chapters V and VI; Chapter VII deals with the prominent letters cited as Pauline evidence (Galatians, I and II Corinthians, Romans); The Synoptic contribution towards the positive view is reviewed in Chapter VIII. The concluding chapter presents a comprehensive digest of the thesis, and a concluding statement to the effect that the scientific historical study of the facts and data inevitably leads to Jesus as a historic person and the founder of Christianity.

Chapter II

JESUS, A MYTH

Six years after the bold and spectacular appearance of Strauss' Life of Jesus, Bruno Bauer wrote his Criticism of the Gospel History of the Synoptics. The outspoken conclusions brought upon him a fate similar to that of Strauss. Through the pressure of the Minister, Eichhorn, and the influence of the Faculties of the Prussian Universities, Bauer was forced to cease public teaching in March 1842.

The influence of David Strauss had found a lodging place and influenced greatly the future thinking of Bauer. The latter's choice of the literary method in opposition to the historical method, however, had the most significant effect on the man's conclusions. Bauer determined to follow out, to its ultimate consequences, the literary solution of the problem of the life of Jesus. As a result of a critical study of the fourth Gospel, he concluded in 1840[1] that its reflective nature could be accounted for only by a literary origin. It was only a step from this discovery to its application to the Synoptics. Mark's origin was found to be purely literary. Matthew and Luke, being dependent upon Mark, became therefore purely literary expansions of Mark, and like it, purely literary inventions.

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[1] Kritik des Evangelischen Gesch. des Johannes, Bremen, 1840.

The significance of this literary approach is found in its application to the phenomena of the birth-stories.

> "If these had been derived from tradition they could not differ from each other as they do. If it is suggested that tradition had produced a large number of independent, though mutually consistent, stories of the childhood, out of which the Evangelists composed their opening narratives, this also is found to be untenable, for these narratives are not composite structures. The separate stories of which each of these two histories of the childhood consists could not have been formed independently of one another; none of them existed by itself; each points to the others and is informed by a view which implies the whole. The histories of the childhood are therefore not literary versions of a tradition, but literary inventions." (2)

The last bulwark of Christian Tradition was threatened by Bruno Bauer in 1877(3) when he denied the historicity of the four Pauline epistles which the Tübingen school had accepted, and transferred them to the second century. Thus the literary method was used and resulted in Bauer's complete denial of the historic Jesus as the founder of Christianity. While he accomplished much in establishing the priority of the Gospel of Mark, he weakened the position of Matthew and Luke by referring their digressions and differences to "the creative power of the evangelists." These writers, in turn, were influenced by dominant, contemporary dogmatic and theological ideas. The Gospel of Mark does not escape the far-reaching

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(2) Albert Schweitzer, p. 1, QHJ

(3) Bruno Bauer, Christus und die Caesaren. Der Ursprung des Christentums aus dem romischen Griechentum, Berlin, 1877.

consequences of this assertion. Bauer logically maintains that this book, the earliest of them all, was the product of Judea-Graeco-Roman forces.

In a paragraph by Goguel, we find the essence of Bauer's view.

> "The primitive evangelist was a creator, and his work is the product of the faith of the early Christians. Christianity was born at the beginning of the second century from the meeting of the different currents of thought, originating in Judea, Greece, and Rome. The person of Jesus was merely a literary fiction. Jesus is the product, not the creator of Christianity." (4)

Albert Kalthoff sought the origin of Christianity in the social movements of Gospel-time. There were in existence communistic clubs formed by the working classes, the wage-earners--the proletarian masses. The Stoic philosophy appealed to these particular classes. Imperial Rome was cruel in her taxation and oppression. In contact with this boiling ferment came Jewish messianism. The fusion of these movements gave birth to a new social movement--Christianity. So Kalthoff reasons that, in the beginning, Christianity was purely a "socio-religious" or "socio-ethical" movement of the masses. The Jewish synagogue influenced Roman social conditions so that "the crude social ferment at work in the Roman Empire amalgamated itself with the religious and philosophical forces of the time to form the new Christian social movement."(5)

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(4) M. Goguel, p. 10, JN
(5) From Das Christus Problem. Quoted by A. Schweitzer, p.315, QHJ

One might ask, "What place does the foregoing conclusion give to Jesus?" The reply is, "Very little, if any." His existence is unnecessary in the explanation of the origin of Christianity. "There had been many a 'Christ' before there was any question of a Jesus in connexion with this title."(6) We are told that even if Jesus did exist and was crucified (like numerous Jewish messiahs), he had no vital part in the founding of Christianity.

The introduction of the person of Jesus in the Gospels is attributed to early Christian writers who had learned in the synagogue to construct "personifications." Kalthoff claims that the whole late-Jewish literature rests upon this principle. Thus, "from the socio-religious standpoint, the figure of Christ is the sublimated religious expression for the sum of the social and ethical forces which were at work at a certain period."(7)

The effect of this view on the Gospels is astounding. Kalthoff holds that the whole character and life of Jesus were a creation of the early church. "The history of Jesus is only that of the idea of the Christ--it reflects the development of the community."(8) The narratives concerning Jesus--his experiences--only mirror the community's own life of persecution and martyrdom. In this respect, the Gospels are creations by the early Christian community to embody in an ideal figure and

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(6) Albert Schweitzer, loc. cit.
(7) Albert Schweitzer, loc. cit.
(8) M. Goguel, p. 17, JN

preserve in a permanent form the principles and ideals of the community.

In Kalthoff's own words we find the essence of his view.

> "The picture of Christ in all its main features is ready before a single line of the Gospels was written. Philosophy produced the framework of a universal world view into which the picture of Christ was inserted. The economic conditions of Rome brought together the explosive material which was discharged in Christianity, and in the religious brotherhoods were given the organizing forces which combine all the tendencies of the time in the actual structures of the Christian communities."(9)

Kalthoff does not deny the historicity of Jesus. He does grant the probability that a man Jesus lived and was crucified. But, as far as this Jesus having any vital relationship to, or being the founder of Christianity, his theory is negative. "The Christ of the Gospels is simply the consciousness of the Christian community personified and objectified, and the factors in its formation can be shown in the common life of the age."(10)

Peter Jensen, unlike other proponents of myth theories, deals primarily with the gospel materials. His method is further differentiated from the others in that he approaches the problem from the point of view of an Assyriologist. He

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(9) Das Christus-Problem. Quoted by M. Jones in The New Testament in the Twentieth Century, p. 68.
(10) Ibid., p. 69.

maintains that he can find the larger part of Jesus' history in parallel in the Gilgamesch Epic. This poem is supposed to have been in existence two thousand years before the Christian era. It deals with the adventures of Gilgamesch, the King of Erech in S. Babylonia, his friend Eabani, and the goddess Ishtar. In the Gospels and the Epic there are found agreements in individual items and in the successive arrangement of the events. As a result, many of the significant incidents in the life of Jesus become mere repetitions of so-called parallel incidents recorded in the saga.(11) Jesus' Baptism, his wilderness experience, the sending of the twelve disciples, the feeding of the five thousand, the transfiguration, and the whole story of the Passion and the Resurrection, have their origin in the Epic, according to Jensen, and therefore the entire life of Jesus is unhistorical.

The Assyriologist "concedes that there may be an historical element at the base of the Gospel tradition, but this fact is without import. Whatever the history of the man Jesus may have been, the Christ of the Faith was born of the transformation of the Babylonian myth of Gilgamesch. Like Jesus, Gilgamesch is a person partly human, partly divine; his history, in which Jensen finds an astral character, is that of the quest of immortality."(12)

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(11) Shirley J. Case gives a splendid parallel of the significant events in Jesus' Life and the events of Gilgamesch. p.77, THJ

(12) M. Goguel, p. 17, JN

We have purposed in this chapter to present the three proponents of mythical theories who, apparently, arrived at their conclusions indirectly. Bruno Bauer began with a study of the Fourth Gospel, using the literary method; Albert Kalthoff reached his negative conclusions through a study of the social, economic and religious forces of Gospel-times; and Peter Jensen concluded the unhistoricity of Jesus as a result of his study of the Babylonian myth.

In the ensuing chapter it is the writer's aim to state and review the negative theories based deliberately on the assumption that Jesus never lived, nor could have lived as an historic person.

Chapter III

JESUS, A MYTH (Continued)

The myth theory, in various forms, is not without its modern proponents. Dr. Pfleiderer of Berlin develops the theory that Christianity belongs to the world of myth and should be studied in relationship to the myths of universal history. M. Loisy, a French Roman Catholic Modernist, and George Tyrrell, practically agree on a divorce of faith from fact in Christianity and leave little historical certainty for the person of Jesus. Dr. K. Anderson also distinguishes between the living Christ and the Historical Jesus. F. C. Conybeare, while not denying the historicity of Jesus does consider the influence of current mythology in the Gospel records.

While other names could be mentioned, it is our purpose in this chapter to present those whom we consider to be the three outstanding representatives of the negative theory in the twentieth century: J. M. Robertson, an Englishman; William B. Smith, an American; and Arthur Drews, a German. We noted in the introductory chapter that their approach and conclusions to the problem are so similar that, in a general way, a summary statement of their position can be made.

These men are commonly agreed that there were many

secret cults in existence before the beginning of the Christian era. Most emphatic are they in their contention that among these many secret cults was a pre-Christian cult of Jesus. The ideas and practices of this particular cult, which were later given form in the New Testament writings, are considered as loans from ancient religions and pagan myths. Jesus is supposedly taken from the same root as Joshua--the meaning being "Savior," "Deliverer," and "Healer." Joshua, or Jesus, does not refer to the person in the Old Testament Book of Joshua, but to a Sun-god. So the origin of Christianity is referred to a Jewish secret cult which possibly was centered in Jerusalem. The existence of the person Jesus is denied (or at least not recognized as having a founder-relationship), and the New Testament tradition is interpreted only symbolically.

J. M. Robertson has traced the picture of Christ in the Gospels to a mixture of mythological elements in heathenism and Judaism. His essential attitude is found in a quotation from Pagan Christs.

> "A cult associated with the quasi-historic name of Jesus emerges at the beginning of the Christian era which may be connected with an actual historic person, an elusive figure of a Jesus who appears to have been put to death by stoning and hanging about a century before the death of Herod. On the other hand, the name of Jesus in its Hebrew and Aramaic forms had probably an ancient divine status, being borne by the mythical deliverer Joshua and again by the Quasi-Messianic High Priest of the Restoration. It was thus in every respect, fitted to be the name of a new Demi God who should

> combine in himself the two qualities of the Akkadian Deliverer-Messiah and the sacrificial God of the most popular cults of the Graeco-Roman, Egyptian, and the West Asiatic world."(1)

The thing that differentiates Robertson's theory from Smith's and Drew's is his contention that in Mithraism are foreshadowed all the essential experiences of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospel story. Mithra is a Persian deity, represented as a "mediator between God and man, creator, regenerator, and giver of all light, the champion of justice, truth, and holiness, the comforter of man in all trouble, and more particularly the strong helper against all the powers of evil."(2) Robertson maintains that the Virgin birth, Jesus' death, the cross, the resurrection, and other views of primitive Christianity, are mere imitations of the cult of Mithra.

So we find Robertson, handicapped by the influence of "naturalism," implying that

> "Religions develop by a regular law, continually producing new gods, who are substituted for or added to the old ones, sometimes presenting themselves as sons of the latter. Jewish Monotheism thus gave birth to the Messianic cult. The adoration of Jesus is only the reappearance of an old religion which existed in Israel at the time when Abraham, Isaac, Moses and Joshua were still deities. Among these cults the most important was that of Joshua, the solar-deity of Ephraim, worshiped under the symbols of the lamb and the ram. This god Joshua is not unrelated to the Syrian Adonis

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(1) J. M. Robertson, Pagan Christs, p. 91. Quoted by M. Jones, p. 70, NTTC

(2) M. Jones, p. 128, NTTC

> and the Babylonian Thummuz. The new cult of Jesus-Joshua.....created a whole legendary tradition, whose principal elements have a distinctly mythical character. It is possible, however, that in these developments there may have been included certain historical souvenirs relating particularly to John the Baptist and to a certain Jesus Ben-Pandera, put to death under Alexander Janneus."(3)

William Benjamin Smith contends that Christianity could not conceivably have been given its impetus and inspiration by one lone person: there are but few allusions to the public activity of Jesus in the accepted Pauline writings and the apologetics of the first Christian writers; it is impossible for humanity so easily to deify one of its own members. On the basis of these assumptions, Smith cannot accept the Historical Jesus, but a purely divine Jesus. For him, the man Jesus never existed. The tradition "that this God Jesus lived in Judea as a man was but the result of giving the subject of the myth a human form."(4)

Smith's conclusions are partly founded on an argument from silence. He points out that writers, other than Christian, do not mention the village of Nazareth; therefore, we cannot prove the existence of Nazareth; consequently it has no historical significance. This superficial treatment is also given the name of Jesus: It is claimed a fictitious name, derived from the Hebrew root NSR which is used sixty-three times in the Old Testament in the sense of watching, and protecting.

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(3) M. Goguel, p. 16, JN
(4) F. Loofs, <u>What is the Truth about Jesus Christ</u>? p. 6.

Jesus is thus made a primitive cult-god who was worshipped as the watcher, protector, and savior.

Another support for Smith's belief in the divine pre-Christian Jesus is his attempted proof of the existence of a pre-Christian sect of Nazarenes, based upon the hymn of the Naasseni. A pre-Christian date is claimed for the hymn and the Jesus is referred to the celestial realms. The hymn in question is translated by Goguel.

> "Then Jesus said: 'Behold, O Father! this tempted being who, far from Thy influence, wanders miserably on earth. He longs to fly from bitter chaos, but he knows not how to ascend. For his salvation, O Father! send Me; that I may traverse the aeons, that I may open the mysteries, that I may reveal unto him the essence of God, and announce unto him the mystery of the holy life which is called the gnosis.'"(5)

Firmly convinced of these "evidences" for his position, Smith concludes that there was a divine pre-Christian Jesus who was worshiped by the Jewish sect of Nazarenes and the Naasseni Gnostics.

In his preface to the first and second editions of <u>Christ Myth</u>, Arthur Drews emphatically states that it is his purpose "to prove that more or less all the features of the historical Jesus.....bear a purely mythical character, and no opening exists for seeking an historical figure behind the Christ myth."(6) In the following paragraphs we have the

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(5) M. Goguel, pp. 57, 58, JN
(6) Arthur Drews, <u>Christ Myth</u>, p. 19.

main outline of his attempt to achieve this primary purpose.

Drews first pictures for us the general unrest of the time. A feeling of uncertainty caused by the collapse of the nation states under the impact of the Roman Empire, loss of independence, political and social instability--all created a longing for supernatural aid and revelation. Coupled with this general distress were fears of afterlife and the soul. Apocalypticism was rampant

The author suggests that in the effort to gain social, political and religious certainty, cults and religious sects arose. The cult of the Emperors is given as an example. It is maintained that there were also numerous Jewish sects, greatly influenced by Persian dualism--Ahuramazda and Angromainyu, representatives of good and evil. In the Persian scheme, Mithras championed the cause for good and was represented as the "savior," and "deliverer," of mankind. He was also claimed as the gate through death to immortality. During the two-hundred years of Persian domination such ideas profoundly influenced Jewish monotheism. We are also reminded that this dualism between the natural and supernatural was further sharpened with the coming Hellenistic culture after the Alexandrian conquest of the Persian Empire. As an illustration of this fact, Drews points to Philo who, in his conception of a mediator, The Logos, sought to reconcile the two extremes and give to man the means of communion with God.

The author of Christ Myth then seeks the influence

of this "foreign" dualism on certain Jewish sects: He finds that the Therapeutes were followers of Philo. Another sect, beyond the Jordan, The Essenes, was also found to maintain a dualism of body and soul. These sects were united in their conception of a God-redeemer, a mediatory being, "originally hidden in God and then expressly awakened or appointed by him" to redeem the lost world. Just as Morduk is the name for the Babylonian mediator, or Mithras, for the Persian deliverer, so Joshua or Jesus was the name under which the expected God-redeemer was honored in certain Jewish sects.

From this "evidence" Drews concludes, "Jesus or Joshua was originally a divinity, a mediator, and God of healing of those pre-Christian Jewish sectaries, with reference to whom we are obliged to describe the Judaism of the time--as regards certain of its tendencies, that is--as a syncretic religion."(7)

If to anyone, it is to Paul, and not to Jesus, that Drews attributes the origin, growth, strength and impetus of Christianity. "Without Jesus the rise of Christianity can be quite well understood, without Paul, not so."(8)

Strangely enough, Drews appears to assume the genuineness of four accepted Pauline Epistles, but holds that they do not refer, mention or imply the historic person of Jesus.(9) Paul did not know Jesus "in the flesh," he never

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(7) Ibid., pp. 31-63.
(8) Ibid., p. 19.
(9) Ibid., pp. 165-213.

thought of Jesus as a man when he spoke of him. His appeal was to a spiritual, heavenly Christ. The epistles of Paul are considered mere evidences of the Christian Community's consciousness of its "religious peculiarities" and its "divergence from the official Jewish religion," and are also "the first brilliant outline of a new religion developed with Jesus as its central idea."

Drews questions the possibility of ever proving Pauline authorship of any epistle attributed to him. Upon W. B. Smith's suggestion that the Pauline epistles were not completely known in the first century and the epistle to the Romans was not testified to before the middle of the second century, Drews bases the conclusion that the epistles, as we have them, cannot be accepted as the primary source of Pauline doctrines. He finally grants the impossibility of proof, either for or against, because "we lack any certain basis," and takes up the task of showing the kind of Jesus he sees in Pauline Epistles.

Such passages as Galatians 1:12, 16; I Corinthians 2:10; and II Corinthians 4:6, are presented as evidences of Paul's teaching and belief in a spiritual, heavenly Christ. The lack of Paul's interest in giving accurate, detailed information as to the personality and teachings of Jesus is cited as proof of an unhistorical Pauline Jesus.

Drews denies Jesus brothers, sisters,and parents by maintaining that the expression "Brother" is only a general

term for members of the Christian Community. The phrase, "Words of the Lord", is said to refer to "mere rules of a community such as were current and had canonical significance everywhere in the religious unions." By these selected passages and peculiar interpretations, Drews is convinced that "the Jesus painted by Paul is not a man, but a purely divine personality, a heavenly spirit without flesh and blood, an unindividual superhuman phantom."

Thus Professor Drews "proves" his assumption. Jesus was not an historical person but the "Son of God" given significance by the genius of Paul. He was a "Messiah"--the product of "syncretised Judaism," the sects of which had been influenced by the Persian Mithras, Babylonian Marduk, and other Indian mysteries. Through Paul's writing and expression of this heavenly Christ, the Christian Community had its origin and impetus for growth and expansion.

With this survey of Drews' position we conclude our review of the negative theories. In the next chapter we anticipate the line of treatment pursued in the remaining pages of the thesis by presenting a summary of the various lines of attack made by the opposition on the Historicity of Jesus.

Chapter IV

A SUMMARY OF THE VARIOUS LINES OF ATTACK AGAINST THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS

The opponents of the Historical Jesus have left no stone unturned in their efforts to pierce the positive defense. Although there are other lines of attack, we shall concern ourselves with those thrusts at the reliability of Christian and non-Christian sources in the extra-biblical evidence, and the bold assertions against the authenticity and historical value of the Pauline and Synoptic evidence.

In the argument against the reliability of Christian extra-biblical evidence, it is claimed that Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp were too far removed from the beginnings of Christianity for their testimony to be dependable. The general contention is that these "Fathers" merely reflect the contemporary Christian tradition with its theological and philosophical reflections.

It will be observed throughout this paper that the arguments of "vital interpolation" and "silence" are brought forth again and again. These arguments are used against the non-Christian extra-biblical evidence. Schürer argues that Josephus, who was a prolific writer and historian, would hardly be content with writing so little on the life and death of Jesus.

Therefore the two passages in Jewish Antiquities are to be treated as interpolations of Christian copyists. Arthur Drews also attacks the authorship of these passages from the argument of silence and the sparsity of details in regards to the life and death of Jesus. These men, furthermore, seize upon the serious conflict of opinion between the Gospel tradition and the derogatory myths and legends of the Talmund and the Tol' doth Yeshu, and give the two Jewish sources the precedence in historical value.

The evidence in Pliny's letter to Trajan is denounced on the grounds that it is impossible to determine whether he refers to a historical person or to a purely spiritual ideal worshipped by the Christians.

The Tacitus passage is discounted on the supposition that he received his information from Josephus or his friend Pliny.

The passage in Suetonius' Life of Claudius is thrown out by the refusal of Graetz and others to identify "Chrestus" with "Christus."

Efforts to destroy the value of Pauline evidence have found expression in the questioning of the genuineness and authorship of the Pauline letters. It is suggested that Paul was only a myth, a product of the early community's imagination. Or, had he existed, the letters, in their present form, are only compilations by later Christians. Any reference in these letters to the historicity of Jesus is therefore

called a later insertion. Where the existence of Paul and his authorship are accepted, it is claimed that he knew only a spiritual, ideal Christ, and that his writings are only theological documents prepared for the general use of the early churches.

The various lines of attack appear to be most vicious at the point of the Synoptic evidence. Speaking in a general way, it might be said that all of the external evidence for the historicity of the Gospels is dismissed; the conclusions of modern critical scholarship are ignored; all personal and natural features of the narratives are overlooked; and the Synoptics are considered as spurious literature, a late product of theological and literary imagination.

Drews, whose views are considered to be representative of the modern negative school, lines up the following in battle array.(1) He attacks the correctness of an allusion to Papias on the basis of "Eusebius' notorious unreliability." To the Gospels he grants only a religious purpose--a purpose to awaken the belief in Jesus as a spiritual Messiah. Partly on this assumption, all historical reference is denied. The Synoptics are relegated to a much later date than is commonly accepted by historical criticism. Upon the accepted fact that most of the Gospel material is "second-hand" Drews doubts its historical value. The sparsity of details concerning Jesus'

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(1) Author Drews, The Christ Myth, pp. 214-230.

life, and the lack of coherence in the writing of the Gospels are used to prove the historical unreliability of the records. The recognition of the questionable character of some miracles is used to discredit any historical core. Drews finally comes face to face with the problem of separating the actual from the unreal, and, in the disparagement of a skeptic, claims it an impossible task and votes for the unreal and the mythical.

In the remaining pages of this thesis, it is our purpose to meet these various lines of attack by presenting the significant results and conclusions of the positive side.

Chapter V

THE HISTORICAL JESUS:

Extra-Biblical Evidence (Christian Sources)

The evidences for the positive argument are so cumulative that it would be an endless task to review every letter and document in detail. It will be the purpose of the writer to present those evidences which are generally accepted as referring to and implying the historical Jesus or proving his earthly existence. We shall give first consideration to the extra-biblical evidence. For purposes of form and simplicity, we divide this evidence into two groups. Namely, the non-Christian and the Christian sources. In the present chapter we are interested in the Christian sources.

The immediate successors of the Apostles, Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp, in their letters covering the twenty year period between A.D. 95 and A.D. 115, not for one moment doubt the earthly existence of Jesus. We shall see that their writings testify to a person called Jesus who talked and walked among the hills of Galilee. While it is true that these "Apostolic Fathers" reflect the contemporary Christian tradition, both in its historical and in its interpretative characteristics, they are confident of Jesus' existence and authority.

Clement of Rome wrote a letter to the Corinthians

about the close of the reign of Domitian (A.D. 95 or 96). In the thirteenth chapter of the epistle, he has a collection of precepts "on forbearance and longsuffering." Whether its sources be in The Logia, The Gospel according to Saint Matthew, or Luke, the passage speaks for a person who lived in conditions that called out for mercy, forgiveness, and kindness. We quote the lines in question.

> "Thus He (the Lord Jesus) spake:-
> Show mercy, that you may receive mercy;
> Forgive, that you may be forgiven;
> As you do, so shall it be done to you;
> As you judge, so shall you be judged;
> As you are kind, so shall you be treated kindly;
> With what measure you measure, therewith
> shall it be measured to you."(1)

Vincent H. Stanton presents convincing evidence that the seven epistles of Ignatius, written between A.D. 110-115, were acquainted with and influenced by the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. He compares Matthew 3:15 with the phrase in the Smyrna epistle, "in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him." Matthew 15:13 is found to agree with the description Ignatius applies to false teachers in his Philadelphia letter, "They are not the planting of the father." Stanton furthermore sees a similarity between Matthew 10:16 and Ignatius' advice to Polycarp, "be thou prudent as the serpent in all things, and guileless always as the dove."(2)

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(1) V. H. Stanton, The Gospels as Historical Documents, p. 6.
(2) Ibid., p. 14.

In addition to these parallels, Ignatius buttresses the primitive Christian tradition by exhorting his readers to adhere to the primitive faith, being "fully persuaded concerning the birth and the passion and the resurrection, which took place in the time of the governorship of Pontius Pilate."(3)

Our attention is called to the striking similarity between a part of the teaching in "The Sermon on the Mount," as found in Matthew, and the following lines from the second chapter of Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians (A.D.110-115).

> "Remembering the words which the Lord spake, as He taught;
> Judge not that ye be not judged.
> Forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you.
> Shew mercy, that you may receive mercy.
> With what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again.
> And that,
> Blessed are the poor and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God."(4)

Besides this evidence of conscious or unconscious influence of one or more of the Gospels, there is another passage in which Polycarp exhorts his readers to entreat "the all-seeing God with supplications that He 'bring us not into temptation' according as the Lord said, 'The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'"(5) The quotation from "The Lord's Prayer" is found in both Matthew and Luke. The last quotations parallel Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38.

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(3) Mag., II. Quoted by S. J. Case, p. 240, THJ
(4) V. H. Stanton, p. 16, GHD
(5) Ibid., p. 17.

Whereas the epistles of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, and Polycarp parallel in part the Gospel of Matthew, Hermas of Rome corresponds very closely to Mark. Since Mark is considered by historical criticism to be the earliest gospel, this similarity is most significant for evidence of acceptance of the historical Jesus by tradition. Stanton suggests three instances of parallelism.(6)

> First, "The fault to which Jesus traces the dulness of his disciples in Mark 6:52 and 8:17 is exactly that which Hermas acknowledges in his own case and the same word is used: 'he cannot understand and that his heart is hardened'(M. 4, II.1). He also speaks of some 'who have the Lord upon their lips, but their heart hardened (M. 12, IV. 4).'"
>
> Second, "The precept preserved in Saint Mark, 'Be at peace among yourselves,' occurs in the Shepherd (Compare V.3, IX.2, and XII. 3 with Mark IX. 50)."
>
> Third, "In a passage in which Hermas describes the work of the Apostles there are striking resemblances to the commission given to them at the conclusion of Saint Mark. Compare the phrase, 'apostles and teachers who preached unto the whole world and taught the word of the Lord in soberness and purity' with Mark 16:15 (S 9, 25.I,2)."

The probable date of Shepherd of Hermas is set by Stanton between A.D. 110 and 125 on the supposition that allusions contained in Hermas imply that a time of persecution, with its effects in producing apostasy, was within living

(6) Ibid., p. 45.

recollection, and yet not very recent, and also on the undeveloped organization of the church.

In the Epistle of Barnabas (so-called) is found the earliest instance of the citation of a saying of Christ as "scripture." The passage is Barnabas 4:14, and refers to Matthew 22:14. "Let us give heed lest haply we be found, as it is written, 'many called, but few chosen.'" It is significant to note that in as far as scholars can determine, this saying is found only in Matthew and could not have been derived from any other source.

The probable date for the Epistle of Barnabas is A. D. 130. Harnack holds that the language of chapter 16 appears on the whole to suit the circumstances of A.D. 130-1 (Chron. I pp. 423-6). Stanton, from a study of its doctrinal tendency and interpretations of Old Testament, places the date at A.D. 130.

Aristides, an Athenian Christian philosopher, wrote concerning the conduct and truth of the Christians to Antoninus Pius, A.D. 125. This apology was found in a Syriac version in 1889. In chapter two, Aristides alludes to Jesus, "born of the race of the Hebrews;" having twelve disciples; who "was pierced by the Jews;" "died;" and "was buried." In two sentences previous to the above reference, the philosopher makes a very interesting observation in regard to the history of, and the use of one Gospel. He writes that the Incarnation "is taught in that Gospel which, as is related among them, was

preached among them a short time ago. And you, also, if you will read therein, may perceive the power that belongs to it."(7)

In chapter fifteen, Aristides contrasts the virtue of the Christians with other peoples and reflects the general spirit and attitude of the Gospels. "Wherefore they do not commit adultery or fornication, nor bear false witness, nor covet what is held in pledge, nor covet what is not theirs. They honor father and mother and show kindness to their neighbors. If they are judges, they judge uprightly. They do not worship idols made in human form. And whatsoever they would not that others should do unto them, they do not to others."(8)

We are aware of the fact that the historical value of the above passages are challenged on the basis that they only reflect current Christian thought and accepted traditions. Even granting this, we can hardly deny in these "reflections" the self-evident fact, that the writers took for granted the existence, authority and power of Jesus. The person of Jesus seems to be a settled and accepted matter in the minds of these authors and, in most instances, in the minds of their readers.

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(7) Joseph C. Ayer, A Source Book for Ancient Church History, pp. 69-72.

(8) Joseph C. Ayer, loc. cit.

Chapter VI

THE HISTORICAL JESUS:

Extra-Biblical Evidence (Non-Christian Sources)

When we turn to the non-Christian sources for evidence in favor of the positive argument, we find that they can conveniently be divided into two groups. Namely, the Hebrew sources, and the Roman writers. In the first group, The Antiquities of the Jews, Talmund and Midrash, and The Tol'doth Yeshu, are most significant. Of the Roman writers, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, and Suetonius are the most reliable. We shall present them in the order given.

Hebrew Sources

Josephus, born about A.D. 37-38, wrote The Antiquities of the Jews in the last decade of the first century. In this history he speaks twice of Jesus. The first passage, in its entirety, has been called in question and treated as an interpolation of Christian copyists. Schürer, as a representative of such scholarship, argues that Josephus--a verbose writer of every petty incident of social and political interest--would hardly be content with writing a few words on the life and death of Jesus. So he maintains "that Josephus deliberately avoided the whole subject, since he could not touch on it without treating of the Messianic ideas of the Jews; and Josephus was

obviously chary of dealing with such a topic, political to the core, in pages written for the benefit of the Romans at the very time that the emperor Domitian was persecuting all the descendants of the House of David."(1) Arthur Drews also, from the argument of silence, similarly attacks the value of this first passage as evidence for the positive argument.

However, there is something to be said on the other side. Men like Klausner and Graetz do not accept the argument for the interpolation of the entire passage. On the basis of the fact that Josephus' account of John the Baptist does not correspond with the Gospel account, the two contend that there is no ground for suspecting an interpolation of the whole passage. With Albert Reville they will grant that only the underlined words of the passage below are probably insertions by Christians.

> "Now there was about this time (i.e., about the time of the rising against Pilate who wished to extract money from the temple for the purpose of bringing water to Jerusalem from a distant spring) Jesus, a wise man, <u>if it be lawful to call him a man</u>. For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. <u>He was the Messiah</u>; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross those that loved him at the first ceased not (so to do), <u>for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine Prophets had foretold then and ten thousand other wonderful things con-</u>

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(1) Joseph Klausner, <u>Jesus of Nazareth</u>, p. 57.

> cerning him; and the race of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct even now."(2)

The three men favor Josephus' authorship in the remaining parts for "no Christian interpolater would speak of Jesus as 'a wise man,' and so necessitate the further interpolation, 'If it be lawful to call him a man.' Now would a Christian interpolater be satisfied to apply to Jesus the general term 'wonderful works,' or call his disciples simply 'lovers,' nor would he have given the Christians such a name as 'race' or 'tribe,' with its nuance of contempt."(3)

In the second passage in question in the Antiquities, Josephus tells of a certain Annas who brought before the Sanhedrin James, "the brother of Jesus who was called the Messiah." There is no reason to doubt the authorship of this passage. Klausner agrees with Holtzmann and P. W. Schmidt that "there is not the slightest room for doubt" and that "it is unquestionably genuine."(4)

Maurice Goguel(5) offers perhaps the best explanation of the silence of Josephus, in favor of the positive side. The silence is to be explained by the "character" and purpose of his writing. "He desired to flatter the Romans and gain their good graces. He did not want to offend or excite their appre-

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(2) Antiquities XVIII iii3. Quoted by J. Klausner, p. 56, JON
(3) Joseph Klausner, p. 58, JON
(4) J. Klausner, loc. cit.
(5) M. Goguel, pp. 36, 37, JN

hension. To mention the cult would imply a menace to Rome." As an illustration of this point, Goguel refers to the fact that John the Baptist is portrayed only as a moral preacher and any prophetic characterization which pointed to a Messiah is omitted. It was impossible to mention Christianity and neglect its Messianic theme. Josephus therefore maintained silence on the subject. We are further reminded that Josephus wrote after the persecution of Nero, when Christianity and Judaism were distinct. An explicit and detailed description of Christianity could easily have been out of his domain of purpose and intent.

Goguel favors the conclusion of Johann Weiss[6] when he writes, "The silence of Josephus is not therefore the silence of ignorance: It is the silence of prudence and fear--a silence actuated by interest. Far from proving that Jesus and the Christian movement did not exist in Palestine in the first century, it only proves that Josephus did not wish, by speaking of it, to compromise himself and with himself the Jewish people."

We must grant that there is but little extra-canonical detail in regard to the life of Jesus. However, these two passages do testify to the existence of Jesus about the time of Pilate; that he was considered "a wise man" and "teacher;" that both Jew and Gentile followed him; that certain influential Jews were the cause of his death; and that in A.D. 93 his followers

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(6) J. Weiss, Jesus von Nazareth, Mythus oder Geschichte, p. 89.

were increasing--so powerful was his personality.

The two remaining Hebrew sources are not so favorable as Josephus in their mention of Jesus, his teaching and works. These are most evidently products of Jewish writers who despised, hated and cursed Jesus and his movement. The stories related in the Talmund seem to have been purposely written to contradict events recorded in the Gospels. Joseph Klausner(7) presents an interesting study in a comparison of some Talmund stories with significant facts and acts of Jesus as found in Gospel tradition. "The Gospels say that Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit and not of a human father; The Talmund stories assert that Jesus was indeed born without a father, yet not of the Holy Spirit but as the result of an irregular union. The Gospels say that he performed signs and wonders through the Holy Spirit and the power of God; the Talmund admits these signs and wonders but attributes them to magic. In the Gospels, Jesus' opposition to the Pharisees and Scribes, and his own teaching as to what constitutes true religion, are held up for admiration; the Talmund, however, avers that he was a "sinner in Israel' and a 'scoffer against the words of the wise.'"

There is no question but that there is a serious conflict of opinion here between the Gospel tradition and the Talmund. The representatives of the myth theories have a difficult time convincing the positive side that such spite,

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(7) J. Klausner, p. 19. JON

hatred would be entertained over a mere myth or legend. Such controversy can only be accounted for by the presence of a person, a living person, who taught and walked among the people of Palestine. Jesus impressed both his followers and enemies. The first saw in him the good teacher and giver of the abundant life. The second group saw in Jesus only the destruction of their self-contained ritualistic and ceremonial law.

Klausner suggests that the Talmund stories date from a time before the latest of the surviving Gospels reached their present form and before they were accepted as of canonical rank. We can thus be assured "that before the latest of the existing Gospels received their final shape, many accounts, oral or even written, of the life and teaching of Jesus were current among the first Christians, accounts drawn upon by the evangelists who are known to us."(8)

The Tol'doth Yeshu, in its present form, is usually dated between the fifth and tenth centuries A.D. However, it is very probable that there are parts of it which had their origin at an earlier date. It must be granted that this source has no historical value for the life of Jesus. Its significance lies, however, in the fact that it gives a view of the Jewish reaction to the life and teachings of Jesus. This work has much in common with the Talmund in that the Gospel tradition is not denied, but perverted into a source of ridicule and

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(8) Ibid., p. 20.

blame; the miracles of Jesus are not denied but attributed to the use of magic. Neither is Jesus' moral teaching denied but Peter, who, it is claimed, remained faithful to Israel, is given credit for the introduction of the moral teaching.

Where the argument from silence--"the sparsity of reference and lack of detail"--is proposed to nullify the value of the Talmund and The Tol'doth Yeshu as positive evidence, we point to the purpose and object of these writings. It is self-evident that the authors sought to combat the Christians, and were not interested in writing a history of the Christian religion, or a biography of the Founder.

From the above review, it would seem fair to grant that the Talmund and The Tol'doth Yeshu, although in a derogatory and indirect way, do give evidence of a living dynamic. personality who, in his loyalty to the will of his Father and the Kingdom Ideal, did make life a little uncomfortable for some materialistic, legal-minded Jews. Jesus was a constant living threat to his enemies. To his followers, he was an inspiring living challenge. Only an effective, living, strong personality could have caused the Jews to manufacture legends and stories to protect Judaism.

Roman Writers

Pliny the Younger, the earliest of the Roman writers to make any possible allusion to Jesus, while praetor of the province of Bithynia (98-117), wrote an epistle to Trajan in A.D. 110, requesting advice as to the right method of dealing

with Christians.

The Praetor relates that many people were accused before him as Christians. Those who persistently confessed their loyalty to Christ were executed. Others, who denied that they were Christians, made obeisance to the Emperor's statue, and cursed Christ, were freed. From recanting Christians he learned of their service of song before daylight, their oaths of fidelity, honesty, trustworthiness and generosity. Not satisfied with this testimony, Pliny tortured two maid-servants, who were called deaconesses, but he "found nothing else than a perverse and excessive superstition."(9)

We find little evidence for determining whether this letter alludes to the Jesus of history or to a purely spiritual ideal. Goguel, however, comes to our aid with the suggestion that the expression used by Pliny, "Christo quasi Deo," would appear to mean that Christ was not a God like unto others and the distinguishing factor might have been the earthly existence of Jesus.

Tacitus, in his Annales (A.D.115-117), possibly gives us the most valuable historical information of the three Roman writers. We quote the celebrated passage.

> "To destroy the rumor (which accused him as guilty of the burning of Rome) Nero invented some culprits and inflicted on them the most excruciating punishments; they were those who, detested for their infamies, were called by the

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(9) Joseph C. Ayer, pp. 19-22. SBCH

> populace, Christians. The author of this name, Christ (us), had under the reign of Tiberius been condemned to death by the Procurator Pontius Pilate. This execrable superstition, held in check for a time, broke out anew, not only in Judea, the birthplace of this evil, but also in the city (Rome) in which all atrocities congregate and flourish."(10)

M. Goguel possibly contributes more towards the establishing of the authorship and historical significance of this passage than any recent scholar. He argues for two historical points: The burning of Rome with its accompanying persecution of the Christians; and "Christus" who was condemned to death. The first naturally reflects the contemporary attitude towards the Christians; the second is from a written document which is neither Christian nor Jewish. Goguel is supported by Batiffol in this last contention: "The source of the written document used by Tacitus was not Christian since it presumed an eclipse of Christianity after the death of Jesus; neither was it Jewish, for no Jewish document would have called Jesus 'Christ', nor would it have presented Judaism as solidary with Christianity."(11) The argument that Tacitus received his information of Christ from either Josephus or his friend, Pliny the Younger, is disproved by the different attitude each takes towards Christianity. Goguel finds the attitude of Josephus to be generally favorable, while that of Tacitus to be one of

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(10) Annales XV, 44. Quoted by M. Goguel, p. 40. JN
(11) M. Goguel, p. 41. JN

contempt.

In accepting the conclusion that Tacitus used a non-Jewish, non-Christian document which related Christianity with Christ who was "condemned to death by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, we have a clear and definite reference to the origin of Christianity and to the historical existence of its founder.

Suetonius, in his Life of Nero, confirms a similar statement made by Tacitus when he writes, "The Christians, a set of men of a new and mischievous superstition, were punished." But more important for our purpose is the passage in his Life of Claudius, where he writes that the emperor banished from Rome the Jews who made great tumult because of "Chrestus." This passage very strikingly corresponds to the political situation described in our book of Acts (18:2). Paul found in Corinth "a certain Jew named Aquila.....lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome)."

Scholars of the negative school refuse to identify "Chrestus" with "Christus". Graetz, for one, objects by suggesting that the words do not represent the same person and that "Chrestus" was merely an apostle similar to Apollos, mentioned in Acts. Goguel's suggestion is more convincing: "At Rome the Christians seem to have been called 'Chrestianoi' and not 'Christianoi.'" In following this lead, we have good evidence that within fifteen or twenty years after Jesus'

death, his personality and teachings, through his followers, were vital enough to cause the Jews to raise such a tumult that Claudius found it expedient to expell them.

In spite of the arguments for Christian interpolation, late dates, unauthentic records, and the argument from silence, scholars for the positive side of our problem are generally agreed that the discussed extra-biblical sources have real historical value and point to a living person, Jesus, who was closely related to and, indeed, was the founder of Christianity.

It is upon the testimony of Saint Paul and the Synoptic Gospels that the positive side is most dependent. So, in the next two chapters, it is our purpose to review the Pauline and Synoptic evidence for the Historicity of Jesus.

Chapter VII

THE HISTORICAL JESUS:

Pauline Evidence

The modern proponents of the Jesus-myth, question the authenticity, reliability and authorship of all Pauline epistles, or, at least discredit any contribution to the positive theory, by contending that Paul himself (as a man) never existed but, like Jesus, was only a myth and a product of the early community's imagination, created for the purposes of missionary propaganda. Another weapon used to pierce the belief in the value of Pauline evidence has been termed "vital interpolation." A group of words or a phrase that does not meet the needs and expectations of the myth-proponents is refered to a prejudiced Christian of later date who wanted the passage to say what he thought it ought to say.

One of the most used and recent arguments has been the one from silence. Because Paul apparently does not quote Jesus profusely or give a detailed story of His life, or refer directly to many of his teachings, his knowledge of the earthly Jesus is considered nil. Those passages in which "Christ" is mentioned in the Pauline epistles are interpreted as refering to an ideal, spiritual Christ. Following closely upon the heels of this contention is that one, arising from a "scanning"

method of reading, which sees in the epistles only theological documents, written for the sole purpose of propagating Paul's Christology throughout the whole world.

It is not our purpose to deal directly with these negative arguments and systematically disprove them. However, it is hoped that a positive presentation of the Pauline evidence, as interpreted by modern critical scholarship, will suffice to show the untenability of the negative propositions.

Genuineness and Authorship

Modern historical scholarship recognizes that "Q", the "We-sections" in Acts written by Luke, Chapter fifteen in Acts, and the section in Galatians on the Jerusalem Conference, are possibly the oldest written documents of extant Christian sources. Next to these are placed the accepted Pauline epistles. These letters are now considered the oldest extant books of the New Testament. The period of their composition is generally cited from A.D. 50 to 63. Although McGiffert gives Galatians first place in the order of composition, it is generally conceded that I Thessalonians is the oldest book in the New Testament. Then follow in order, II Thessalonians, Galatians, I and II Corinthians, and Romans. Since the scholars for the historicity of Jesus glean most of their evidence from Gal., I and II Cor., and Romans, we shall confine our critical review to them.[1] Even

[1] For our purpose of citation, it will suffice to speak of II Corinthians as one book.

Renan admits that a brief sketch of the life of Jesus can be formed from material in the Pauline letters to Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians.

The external and internal evidence for the authenticity and authorship of these books are considered good.

The earliest reference to Galatians by name is found in Marcion's Apostolicon. Almost verbal echoes occur in Justin's Dialogue and Cratorie. Polycarp quotes from Galatians 6:7. Ignatius refers to Galatians 1:1, and Clement of Rome, to Galatians 3:1, 29. Adolf Jülicher finds strong internal evidence for Pauline authorship: "The strong excitement under which the Epistle is written excludes all idea of forgery, and explains the occasional obscurities of expression, as well as the audacities or flaws in the argument, better than any theory of interpolation."(2)

I Corinthians has strong and early attestation. Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp are all familiar with it. The first two actually quote from the letter and the third makes copious use of it. Clement, writing to the Corinthians in the last decade of the first century, calls Paul a "notable pattern of patient endurance," and exhorts his readers to peruse again "the epistle of the blessed Paul" which he wrote them in "the beginning of the gospel" and in which he charged them to avoid all party spirit.(3) The genuineness of this letter has been

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(2) A. Jülicher, An Introduction to the New Testament, P. 70.
(3) Shirley Case, Chapter VI, THC

almost universally admitted. The Tübingen school accepted it without reservation and, with the exception of the few who deny the authenticity of all the Pauline Epistles, its authenticity is acknowledged by all modern critics.

II. Corinthians is well known by writers after Marcion but early use or reference to it is not so evident as in the case of I Corinthians. In Polycarp and Ignatius there are found apparent but indistinct references to the letter. Moffat accounts for the unfamiliarity by infering that the letter was not in circulation among the churches as early as I Corinthians.(4)

While there is little early external attestation to the genuineness and existence of II Corinthians, the internal evidence is convincing. "The complexity of relations between Paul and the Corinthian Church, the note of reality which rings in every sentence, the mighty personality which the letter reveals, are far beyond the reach of the most skilful imitator."(5) A further tribute to the genuineness of II Corinthians is given by Jülicher when he suggests that it is the most personal of the extant epistles of Paul. "Apart from its business discussions it is entirely occupied with self-defense and controversy .....the individuality of the Apostle shows itself here in its most many-sided form: in all its burning love, its bitter wrath, its considerate wisdom in the direction of earthly

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(4) J. Moffat, An Introduction to the Literature of the N.T., p.114.
(5) A. S. Peak, A Critical Introduction to the N.T., p. 32.

affairs, and its all-forgetting absorption in the mysteries of the other world. Above all, we are left with the impression that this man and his religion are one."(6)

In regards to the external evidence for Romans, Clement of Rome proves it to have been in circulation the last quarter of the first century. There is no question as to its influence on Ignatius. Polycarp's and Justin's knowledge of the letter is fairly certain. It is admitted by most critical scholars that Romans as we have it may not be the original, still they are certain of a Pauline core and the Pauline characteristics in style and substance. As in the other letters, so in Romans, we cannot escape the reality of a living person and the treatment of the numerous underlying concrete situations. This line of argument is well used by Jülicher in his defense of the internal evidence. "The personal messages are all of them best suited to the situation in which Paul then was; how could a later writer have thought of making him plan a journey to Spain, and even ask something of God which was not granted him, or of putting a doubt into his mouth as to the reception of his collection-money at Jerusalem."(7)

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(6) A. Jülicher, p. 88, AINT
(7) Ibid., p. 109.

Historical Value

Besides the genuineness and authorship, another point of attack by the negative side is the historical value of these letters. Granted that Paul did write them, of what significance are they in the historical arguments? Scholars for the historicity of Jesus suggest several answers.

The historical value of Galatians is found in its evidence for an early date and reference to those who knew the person of Jesus or, at least, approximated his period of earthly existence. In Galatians there is no evidence of organized authority; there is no appeal to definite Christian creeds and pronouncements; Christianity was still sharing with Judaism the right of way, privileges and protection in the Roman Empire; in the endeavor to disprove Paul's apostleship and undermine his authority, the significant fact that Paul's enemies promulgated was that the Jerusalem apostles held the priority of seeing, hearing and knowing Jesus in the flesh.

Like Galatians, I Corinthians was written before any Gospel. If we accept A.D. 55 as its probably date of composition, it is only twenty-five years removed from the crucifixion of Jesus--within the life-time of some of Jesus' contemporaries. This letter is a practical document, the kind that a missionary would write. The appeal to"The Mind of Christ"--his obedience, meekness, and brotherliness--suggests an historic person.

Critical study in II Corinthians has shattered the warped belief in its presentation of an ideal, harmonious,

perfect church and members, thus destroying the basis of mythological contention for theological treatises and general documents of propaganda. A window has been opened to reveal some of the most intimate and personal experiences of Paul which lend high historical value to the letter. Definite problems, growing out of a severe controversy, are very evident. The accusations and slanders of Paul's enemies echo those found in the Galatian letter. Whether it was their primary purpose may be questioned, but the evidence is very definite that they used every possible means to cast a shadow of doubt over the character of Paul and undermine his influence. Paul learned that his adversaries were endeavoring to corrupt and beguile the minds of the Corinthians by resorting to a royal game of political mud slinging. They denounced him as a physical weakling and a poor speaker with little power of persuasion (10:10). Paul was aware of their "debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, smellings, and tumults" (12:20b).

In the endeavor to combat the attacks upon his character and leadership, Paul dares to boast of his work as a true Apostle of the Gospel: He took money from other churches to finance the Corinthian mission (11:8); he personally was not financially dependent upon the Corinthian Christians (11:9); he claimed the heritage of the Hebrew race (11:22); and, because of his loyalty to the founder of Christianity, he boasted of his laboring, imprisonment, and experiences that were close

calls to death's door (11:23). Paul's active eagerness to deny the accusations of the whispering campaign, his daring boldness in upholding his authority and integrity and in boasting of his qualifications for Christian apostleship, betray a reality in this letter (or letters) which is not satisfactorily accounted for by labeling it "the product of the imagination," but by recognizing within it the living person of Paul.

By the advent of Historical Criticism Romans, like II Corinthians, has been delivered from the clutches of the traditional labels, "General Treatise," "Formal Document," and "A Compendium of Pauline System." Representative Scholars of modern criticism are agreed that the facts warrant the conclusion that Romans is a letter written by Paul and sent from Corinth to Rome. This letter differs from others of Paul in that it was sent to a church not founded by Paul. But there is evidence in the letter that he had been informed and knew of particular situations within the church. Strange we do not find those elements which are delightful morsels for the opponents of the historical value of Romans: There is not a word about the resurrection, Christology, sanctification; there is no implication of the pre-existence of Jesus.

Romans has been rightly called "a letter of soteriology." Opponents have readily accepted this interpretation but give it no historical foundation. We cannot escape the convincing assumption underlying all of Paul's claims for salvation. Namely, that the Historic Jesus lived and died. Whatever may

have been Paul's conclusions and whatever terms he used to account for the significance of Jesus in the salvation of mankind, his experience of rea ity came first and his theorizing and speculation, afterwards. This letter is not a reasoned, argumentative document on salvation but is rather a "personal confession." The heart and core of Paul's confession implies a contact with, and a definite knowledge of, the person, Jesus of Nazareth.

"Missionary Letters"

In the fore-part of this chapter we suggested that the attack to discredit Pauline epistles as evidence for the Historical Christ was also based on a prevailing false conception. That is, they were written for no one particular church but for all churches; that they were only theological documents dominated by the single purpose of propogating Paul's Christology (an ideal, spiritual Christ) throughout the entire world.

We cannot escape the fact that there is an element of theology and even possible speculation in Pauline Christology. However, as Goguel very definitely proves, the theological element is not the starting point of Paul's thought but is rather the conclusion of it. "It is the result of an effort imposed on him in the interest of practical apologetics, rather than of speculative curiosity, to give an interpretation of the person and work of Jesus harmonizing with conceptions about spiritual beings current in his time, and with the

position assigned to Jesus by the faith."(8)

So it follows that Paul's epistles are not general Theological Documents which were written for and read in all the early churches. His letters grew out of life-situations. Perplexing problems of the particular churches were brought to his attention during a personal visit; other times, by letter carried by one or more of his aide-de-camps (Timothy, Silas. Apollos), or by a committee, as one might surmise from I Corinthians 16:17. In the four letters we shall see that Paul wrote to particular problems and needs of the individual churches.

In Galatians we soon discover that the dominant problem is Christianity's relation to Judaism. The issue is a very momentous one: How shall a person be saved? From the context we learn that Paul's method by faith is being challenged. It may be a matter of opinion as to whether the adversaries were Jews from the James party in Jerusalem, Jews from Antioch in Syria, local Jews, or Christian Jews within the church, but it is very evident that Paul's Gospel and his character were subject to vicious attacks. The conflict is not one of speculation but a live problem growing out of life.

Also in I Corinthians, Paul replies to definite problems within the church. From the first to the last chapter the letter bristles with pointed questions. One cannot escape the sense of reality in the matter of Cliques, the case of fornication, veiling of women, a lawsuit, the error of mistaking

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(8) M. Goguel, p. 117. JN

ecstasy and speaking in tongues for evidence of the Spirit's presence, and a question of bodily resurrection due to the clash of Greek and Hebrew thought.

Whether there be two or three letters in II Corinthians, the particular challenges stand out very realistically. In the first nine chapters Paul specifically expresses his gratitude for the members' spiritual life and their affection and confidence which has been related to him by Titus. In chapters eight and nine, Paul faces the very real problem of collecting money, and there is a question mark of doubt in his mind. In chapters ten to thirteen, the entire tone and attitude of the apostle changes and in his eagerness to protect his character and integrity against insidious attacks from probably Jewish quarters, he writes a magnificent piece of autobiography.

> "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck.....In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."(9)

Although the letter to the Romans was not, at first glance, prompted by very definite problems and practical difficulties arising from a church with which Paul had dealt first hand, we can possibly deduce particular challenges that deny a wholly speculative character to the letter.(10) Paul's intention

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(9) II. Corinthians 11:24-28.
(10) E. F. Scott, The Literature of the N.T., pp. 157-160.

to visit Rome and the churche's sparsity of knowledge concerning him seems to prompt the apostle to write. We might also infer, from Paul's defense of "his gospel free from the law," that the Roman Christians were uncertain as to his relationship with Judaism. It would not be at all impossible for Paul to have learned from friends of the presence of some Jewish emissaries in the Empire-city. These deductions would suggest that Paul was not writing a general summary of his theological doctrines, but, with definite purposes, he wrote to the particular Christian community in Rome.

So we conclude our treatment of the negative contention that Paul's Epistles are only Theological Treatises, and give our attention to the last significant negative argument. Namely, since Paul apparently does not quote Jesus profusely or give a detailed story of his life, or directly refer to many of his teachings, the apostle did not know of the person of Jesus.

The Pauline Jesus

Historical criticism again reminds us that Paul does not present a coherent view of the life of Jesus and that his allusions to the Gospel History are few. However, after a critical examination of Galatians, I and II Corinthians, and Romans, some scholars find a very definite knowledge and understanding of the Jesus of History.

Both Goguel and Jones argue that in I Corinthians 15:21, Romans 5:15, and Galatians 4:4, Paul presents Jesus as a man

born of a woman; in Galatians 4:4 and Romans 15:8, as a follower of Jewish Law; in Galatians 3:16 and Romans 9:5, as an Israelite; and in I Corinthians 9:5 and Galatians 1:19, 2:9 the apostle has in mind the "physical" brothers of Jesus and specifically mentions James.(11)

In the four letters there are found incidents connected with the life of Jesus. The following are representative of those suggested by Goguel.(12) The cross occupies a dominant place in the letters of Paul. Two illustrations are found in Galatians 3:1 and I Corinthians 2:2. The death of Jesus on the cross with its accompanying suffering, agony and insults are frequently referred to (II Cor. 1:5,7; 4:10; 13:4; Romans 3:25; 8:17; and 15:3). Then in I Corinthians 11:23 Paul mentions that the Lord's Supper was instituted on the night of the betrayal. Finally, in I Corinthians 15:4-8, Paul refers to the burial of Jesus and confirms his appearances after the Resurrection.

Paul's allusions to particular sayings of Jesus is another talking point for the positive side. The following three have been suggested by M. Jones.(13) In suggesting the obligations of the church toward the preachers (I Cor. 9:14) Paul appeals to "the Lord's" command: "If ye are received in a house, eat and drink what is set before you, for the laborer

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(11) Compare M. Jones, p. 41, NTTC with M. Goguel, p. 121, JN
(12) M. Goguel, p. 122, JN
(13) M. Jones, p. 42, NTTC

is worthy of his hire" (Luke 10:7; Matthew 10:10). When advising those who are married, the apostle distinguishes between his opinion and the word of the Lord (I Cor. 7). He appeals to the authority of Jesus found in Mark 10:11,12 and Matthew 19:9 when he writes, "A woman is not to leave her husband." In I Corinthians 11:23-29, Paul quotes, with little addition, the sayings of Jesus as reported in Mark 14:22-25, and introduces them with "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you. In connection with this quotation, Goguel concludes that its origin "is not to be sought in a supernatural revelation, but in an historical tradition to which Paul is the witness."(14)

So numerous are the quotations and allusions of Paul to Jesus' words that scholars like Thorburn, Goguel, and Jones consider the hypothesis that the Logia may have been their source. For purposes of illustration, we give four citations from Goguel and Thorburn.

The apostle very definitely alludes to Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:43) when he writes, "All the law is fulfilled in one saying: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14), "Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not" (Romans 12:14). We are also asked to compare, "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity"(Romans 12:8) with "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men." (15)

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(14) M. Goguel, p. 131, JN
(15) T. J. Thorburn, pp. 84-88, JC

Goguel compares "Never return injury for injury"(Romans 12:17) with "I say unto you, resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39); "Bear one another's burdens, and so carry out the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2) with "If anyone wishes to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35); "Even though I have such faith as might move mountains" (ICor. 13:2) with "If your faith were only like a mustard seed, you could say to this mountain, 'Move from this place to that, and it would be moved'" (Matt. 17:20); and "I exhort you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (II Cor. 10:1) with "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).(16)

It would seem that, even as a persecutor, Paul would have some testimony for the earthly existence of Jesus. He was persecuting Christians for more than their acceptance of a myth or spiritual ideal. Jesus and the cross were real stumbling blocks to him, as it later proved to be for other Jews. Both Jesus and the cross challenged him. The phrase, "Christ crucified, a scandal to the Jews," suggests the attitude which dominated Saul the persecutor.

Two logical conclusions may be drawn from the review in this chapter. First, Pauline evidence for the historical life and teachings of Jesus is fragmentary, piecemeal, and does not present a coherent detailed history. Second, In spite of the validity of the first conclusion, in at least four

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(16) M. Goguel, pp. 131-133, JN

letters of Paul, there is an underlying confidence--a take-it-for-granted attitude--which assumes the historical tradition of the person of Jesus who lived on earth, who gained a following because of his noble teaching and example, who aroused the animosity of some of his fellowmen, and who died on the cross. "The career of Saint Paul both as a persecutor and missionary are inexplicable apart from some such supposition."(17)

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(17)M. Jones, p. 41, NTTC

Chapter VIII

THE HISTORICAL JESUS:

Synoptic Evidence

The Synoptic Gospels have come to be looked upon by the strongest scholars of modern historical criticism as the most decisive evidence for the Historicity of Jesus. Without question, the first three Gospels surpass in value and historical significance the Christian and non-Christian extra-biblical evidence and most of the Pauline evidence.

The Mythologists awoke to the fact that the Synoptic evidence was a very painful thorn in their flesh, so laid down several lines of attack against its historical value. These arguments have been reviewed in Chapter IV. We shall not repeat them here.

We reiterate our purpose and intent as suggested in the beginning of the previous chapter. The writer does not intend systematically to dispose of all negative arguments. But it is hoped that a positive presentation of the Synoptic evidence, as accepted by modern historical criticism, will suffice to show the weakness of the negative attack.

Composition

Through a study of the composition of the Synoptics, modern historical critics have come to agree that there are

particular sections of the books which had their beginnings within the community soon after the death of Jesus, and are therefore so near to the historical fact and person of Jesus that it is practically impossible to conceive of the books as fictitious in their entirety. Since there is such a general agreement among these scholars, we present the following conclusions.(1)

Mark is considered the oldest Gospel, probably written by John Mark at Rome, soon after A.D. 70. The author used traditions of different sources. Among them, the possibly two earliest were a collection of narratives attributed to the apostle Peter, and a collection of sayings and discourses attributed to Jesus (referred to as the Logia). Goguel accounts for additional material by suggesting three stages in the development of the Logia--Mark using the primitive stage while Matthew and Luke used the last two.

Matthew and Luke, it is agreed, were written five to twenty years later. Their structure and content reveal them to be independent attempts to establish "the certainty" of the Christian tradition by combining the narrative of Mark and the Logia, as well as other sources.(2)

Mythologists have maintained that this growth in Gospel tradition implies that they are pure products of the

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(1) M. Goguel, pp. 229-234. JN
(2) B. H. Streeter, The Four Gospels, Chapter IX, N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1925.

early community's or individuals' imagination. M. Goguel, to the contrary, finds this development speaking for their historicity.

> "If, as the mythologists say, the Gospel tradition was only the projection upon the plane of history of a myth or of an ideal drama of redemption, the Gospel history would be homogeneous. It would have been instantly manipulated according to dogmatic principles; it would not be possible to find in it, as is the case in our actually existing Gospels, this lack of adaptation which arises from the fact that the tradition was inadequate or difficult to fit into the frame into which it was desired to force it. The character of Mark's narration is only explicable if matter and frame have two different origins."(3)

External Evidence

The historicity of the Synoptics finds some support in the external evidence. To be sure, the testimony of early Christian writers is not so explicit as could be desired. However, we are definitely assured that the Gospels were in existence before the close of the second century. We can be quite sure of their existence in some form or other before then since it would seem necessary for some time to elapse before they were completed. They did not just happen. They grew.

We are indebted to V. H. Stanton for the following conclusions.(4)

From the third book of Against Heresies, written about

(3) M. Goguel, p. 263. JN
(4) V. H. Stanton, The Gospels as Historical Documents, Part I, pp. 244-276.

A.D. 185 by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, we learn for the first time that the Apostles--Matthew and John--each wrote a gospel, and that two companions of the apostles--Mark, the companion of Peter, and Luke, the companion of Paul--were authors of two gospels. Tertullian, in Marcion, seeks to establish the genuineness of the four gospels in the form in which the church read them. Clement of Alexandria, in one passage of his Stromateis assumes the difference between the authority of the Four Gospels and other writings professing to be Gospels, as authorities for the teaching of Christ. Justin Martyr speaks in general of the "Memoirs of the Apostles" and, in particular, of "Peter's Memoirs." Stanton argues that these writings, which mention the Words, Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, agree in substance with our Gospels. It is a well-known fact among historians that The Muratorian Fragment of the Canon (A.D. 170-200) includes our four Gospels.

Stanton summarizes and evaluates the external evidence for the historicity of the Synoptics.(5)

> "There are many evidences of an early use of Matthew. The testimony of Irenaeus who had heard and seen 'hearers of various Apostles' and 'possibly two who had been hearers of the Lord himself,' points to a connection between our first gospel and a Hebrew document by the Apostle Matthew.....The name of the author of Mark is attested more strongly than that of the author of any other Gospel; and the attribution may be relied upon the more confi-

(5) Ibid., p. 276.

> dently, because Mark was not a man of special eminence.....Of the use of the third Gospel there are early traces, but the first mention of Luke as the author is that by Irenaeus.....It should be remembered also that according to Justin, writing thirty to forty years earlier than Irenaeus, two at least of the evangelists were men of the class to which Mark and Luke belonged, and that in all probability he has these two in mind."

Internal Evidence

As in the case of the external evidence so, in our evaluation of the internal evidence, we are dependent upon the conclusions of authorities. It is pointed out that we are wholly dependent upon tradition for the authorship and origin of the Synoptics. Search as much as we will there is no indication of authorship and origin within the first two Gospels. In Luke alone, we have an introductory statement revealing to us the author's aim and purpose (1:1-14).

The mythologists seize upon this lack of direct reference to date and authorship and make of it an argument against the historicity of the Synoptics. Shirley J. Case admits the lack of self-attestation, but holds that the very absence of apparent labeling speaks for an early date--in "that formative period of Christianity when the things of which they speak were more or less common property and did not need any artificial authentication."(6)

An acceptance of the previous conclusions seems to

(6) S. J. Case, p. 205. THJ

permit the belief in an historic core of Synoptic tradition which "took shape in the land of Jesus' birth and among his own countrymen, and dates from the same general period as Paul's letters, when the new religious movement was being propagated under the guidance of leaders who claimed to trace, either directly or indirectly, their authority as well as their inspiration to a period of personal association with an earthly Jesus."(7)

From his study of Judaism, Joseph Klausner reached a similar conclusion. "To cast wholesale doubt on the historicity of the Synoptic Gospels becomes more impossible the more widely we study all the branches of Judaism during the period of the second temple."(8)

Historical Value

Granted that Historical Criticism has gained and established the historicity of the Synoptics, what value do they have in assuring us of the earthly existence of Jesus? Drews reminds us of the fragmentary nature of the Gospels, their sparsity of details in the life of Jesus. The proponents of the Historicity of Jesus admit this, but ask, "What of it?" Indeed, we find but one reference to Jesus' boyhood, and that is the temple-scene found only in Luke.(9) The greater part of the Synoptic material can be placed within the ministry of Jesus,

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(7) Ibid., p. 221.
(8) J. Klausner, p. 126. JCN
(9) Luke 2:40-52.

the length of which is usually conjectured as three years. From these scanty materials it is impossible to reconstruct the entire life of Jesus. We may not be able to escape Case's conclusion that our present Gospels are literary products framed subsequently to Jesus' career and may have been vitally influenced by the interests, attacks and the conditions of the time, but we ask, "What of it?" It cannot be denied that the writers, or compilers, had religious motives in meeting the "main pragmatic demands of that period."(10) But, in their efforts to assure their readers of salvation and redemption, they appealed to the life, death, and resurrection of an historic person. The Jewish question of Jesus' Messiaship was a matter of importance, and the settlement of this question was attempted by exhibitions of "sanctions from God" and self-attestations of uniqueness on the part of Jesus. But the exhibitions were taken from the daily acts and sayings of a living person.

The mythical and supernatural elements in the Synoptic tradition (such as, walking upon water, and the multiplication of loaves(11)) have been used by the negative side to discredit all Synoptic historical value. The sting of this attack is taken out by Goguel's suggestion that "The mythical and supernatural elements appear to have intervened, not at the origin of the tradition, but in the course of its literary development

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(10) S. J. Case, pp. 141-153. THJ
(11) Mark 6:31-52.

.....The presence in the Gospel narratives of certain themes borrowed from myth or folklore is evidence of the already complex degree of evolution shown in the tradition as we have it, but does not prove that the entire tradition had from its beginnings an exclusively mythical character."(12) To later reflection, the qualities of character and personality, which Jesus displayed through his teaching and living during his earthly ministry, made possible and substantiated the birth, the resurrection stories, and any elements of mythical character.

Not a little of the controversy over our problem has centered around the question of the Resurrection. Much of the difficulty arises from attempts to relate the apparitions of Jesus with the empty tomb. As a result of a critical study and comparison of the Resurrection stories in the Gospels, Goguel concludes that the apparitions of Jesus were independent of the discovery of the empty tomb. In close agreement with Shirley Case, he maintains that pragmatic demands of the period greatly influenced the narratives and "led to the creation of entire groups of traditions such as that of the empty tomb."(13) The early Christians lifted Jesus to the pedestal of the supernatural because his life was otherwise inexplicable. "The belief in his resurrection was a direct consequence of the impression Jesus had made on them."(14)

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(12) M. Goguel, pp. 266, 267. JN
(13) Ibid., pp. 311-313.
(14) M. Goguel, loc. cit.

Adolf Jülicher[15] sees historical value in the Synoptists' accounts of Jesus' deeds: "The main point which each of these more or less embroidered stories seeks to illustrate.....is that he not only taught but acted 'as one that hath authority.'" Of special significance is the historical value which Jülicher finds in the Synoptic Logia--this being considered among the earliest of our extant sources: "The mass of homogeneous parables alone, which we find in the Synoptics, compels us to fall back upon a single personality as the author of a mode of teaching not elsewhere adopted at the time, or at least not in the same way."

> "As a rule, there lies in all the Synoptic Logia a kernel of individual character so inimitable and so fresh that their authenticity is raised above all suspicion. Jesus must have spoken just as the Synoptists make him speak, when he aroused the people from their torpor, when he comforted them and lovingly stooped to their needs, when he revealed to his disciples his inmost thoughts about his message of the Kingdom.....when he contended fiercely with the hostile Pharisees and Saducees, or worsted them by force of reasoning:- for no otherwise can we explain the world-convulsing influence gained by so short a life work."

It is upon the foundation of the above conclusions by historical scholarship--the composition, the historicity, and value of the Synoptics--that we attempt a portrait of the Historical Jesus.

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(15) A. Julicher, An Introduction to the New Testament, pp. 372, 373.

A Synoptic Portrait

Our greatest concern in the remaining pages of this chapter is to answer the question, "What impression of Jesus do we get from the Synoptics?" We have already conceded the possibility that the authors wrote from a religious point of view and hailed Jesus as a Messiah--even a spiritual Messiah. But we shall see that the Synoptists seldom carried that idea back into the words of Jesus himself. So, to avoid confusion of meaning we must keep before our mind's eye, "What kind of a Messiah?" What kind of Messiah did the earliest sources portray Jesus to be? If Jesus thought of himself as a Messiah, what kind did he conceive himself to be? The portrait will depend upon our interpretation of some of the outstanding experiences and turning-points in the ministry of Jesus.

The Synoptists are agreed that the ministry of Jesus was ushered in by a call. In spite of the fact that they did not compare notes when they used this tradition, in spite of the addition of embellishments to show the divine sanction of Jesus, they are agreed that a very definite decision and "revelation" came to the mind of Jesus at the Jordan. Previous to this moment, we may conjecture that Jesus must have thought deeply; that he so lived that his contact with God became more personal and intimate than that of his friends; and that his will approached identity with his Father's. At the Jordan, however, a greater consciousness of his call dawned upon him.

Then he became more aware of a sense of divine mission. How to take up the task, proceed with it, and see it through, were still hazy and uncertain questions. The formulation of principles and plans would take time. He was, on this occasion, confident of one thing, and that was the summons to take up the task of the Kingdom which "was at hand."

The Jordan air was electrified with the expectation of the coming kingdom--the new age to be ushered in by a messiah. John the "Herald" was having a "Kingdom Revival." In this light can we best understand "The Call" as well as the wilderness experience. Both are bound together with the kingdom-idea. It was the kingdom as expected by his age which was one source of Jesus' conflict in the wilderness. One evidence of the new age, according to the popular conception, was an abundance of food. The place of the appearance of the Messiah was expressed according to Malachi 3:1, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." In the third place, the Kingdom of God in Jewish thought was to be a world empire in which Jerusalem would be the capital and all positions of influence be held by Jews.

Torn between the consciousness of his call and his divine mission and these crude materialistic conceptions of his people, Jesus went to a solitary place where he could be alone and undisturbed. At this point, the Synoptists give a tradition (Mark suggests it while Matthew and Luke give fuller accounts)

behind which we believe was a testing experience in which Jesus made the most significant decisions of his life--for the logical outcome of his abiding faith in the decisions was the cross. This was an historic instance where he "was in all points tempted like as we are."(16)

Alone, in the wilderness, Jesus appears to be confronted by three questions: What shall be my primary purpose; how win my people to this Kingdom I am called to build; and how shall I accomplish and realize my task? His own hunger probably made more vivid the memory of his starving people and their material messianic expectations. He could surely win them and the quicker win adherents to the Kingdom if he catered to their physical wants. But his conception of God and his type of Kingdom furnished him with a more spiritual purpose, the essence of which was to reveal God.

The second test had its source in the conflict between the sensational means of attracting followers and the slow, sound educational process of instilling eternal principles through living and example. His people looked for the unexpected and, by fulfilling their desires, he might soon gain a large following. But Jesus deliberately set aside any idea of miraculous display. His conception of the orderliness of God's ways won out, and he concluded that sensationalism would be testing God. For him, the eternal, rock-bottom foundation for his

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(16) Hebrews 4:15.

Kingdom-building was trust in God.

Jesus was a man of his own age, so it was only natural that the third question, concerning outside aid in the realization of his Kingdom, should arise. He must have been aware of the opportunities of aligning his cause with the many contemporary institutions. The Synagogue, the Pharisees, and Roman imperialism, all beckoned to him. Through these established institutions he might gain a foothold. But he saw in the alignment with these material institutions a compromise with the will and purpose of his Father. So he determined with whole-hearted loyalty to worship and serve only his God.

In this momentous period of decision at the beginning of Jesus' ministry we see conclusions which guided his later personal decisions, conduct and teaching--and which greatly enrich our portrait. Jesus was the kind of Messiah which reproduced in living his thoughts of God; he was not a "temple-jumping" Messiah; and his Kingdom was the kind which reproduced the will of God.

Jesus' conception of God and his Will was perhaps the most determining factor in his decisions. We have, at least, two definite examples. One, in the wilderness. The other, in the Garden. The three conflicts were resolved by his direct appeal to God who did not favor "bread," "temple-jumping," or compromise with materialistic powers. Likewise, his decision for the cross was not determined by a regard for his own life,

but by his conception of the will of his Father.

Jesus' conception of a kind of Messiah that would not meet the kingly expectations of his people, in a large measure, determined his teaching and conduct. Evidence is found not only in the temptations but also in Jesus' refusal to break God's natural laws and in his endeavor to show his disciples, at the time of Peter's confession, that probably he must suffer and die at the hands of his foes.

Jesus' conception of the Kingdom with its emphasis on moral and spiritual values likewise determined his course in life. In contrast to the popular conception of an exclusively Jewish kingdom, with wealth and abundance for the race alone and all other nations subservient to it, Jesus preached "the Kingdom is within you." This conception and his tenacious hold to it, caused the loss of his people's support and, for a time, the shaking faith of his disciples.

The writer finds in a suggested interpretation of the transfiguration tradition an added color to the Synoptic Portrait. It is a known fact, that so much difficulty has been experienced in trying to interpret the "Transfiguration", that some scholars, with their "backs to the wall," have termed the story a myth. Perhaps these men are partly justified after dealing with interpretations that label the experience "a dream," "vision," "a miraculous happening," or "a post-resurrection experience." Matters are further complicated since tradition

makes this the disciples' experience also.

The suggestion to make this a "Jesus experience" had made the greatest appeal to the writer.(17) In the light of all the facts we feel sure that, after the removal of the embellishments which have accumulated from telling and retelling, there is an "historical core" in this tradition. We offer the following interpretation.

A close reading of the setting in which this experience is placed reveals a tense feeling between the scribes, pharisees, and Jesus. The Master appears to play the part of a fugitive and constant traveler. He seems to be aware of the growing hostility and antagonism toward himself. He needed no supernatural aid to tell him that the fury of his enemies might burst its bounds, especially if he went to Jerusalem and sought to continue his work of preaching and teaching. On a particular evening, burdened with these thoughts, Jesus walked with three of his disciples among the hills. They stopped to rest. The disciples, tired, and probably care-free, soon went to sleep. But Jesus kept on thinking. He was acquainted thoroughly with Hebrew scriptures and he recalled what God had allowed to happen to Moses and Joshua. It might be expected of him. Jesus reached his decision to go to Jerusalem just as the dawn began to break, and the after-glow of his decision was made more manifest,

(17) The writer is indebted to Dr. W. J. Lowstuter for this suggestion made in his class, Life of Jesus, First semester, 1935-36, B.U.S.T.

perhaps, by the rising sun. Or, the disciples, upon awaking, were told of the experience and caught the spirit of glowing victory which is evident after any resolving of an important struggle.

We reiterate. The elaborate embellishments may have been added through retelling by the disciples and early Christians, but at the heart and center of the tradition stands Jesus at the crossroads, face to face with the momentous decision, "My life or theirs."

After Jesus had taken those decisive steps in the wilderness in the light of his conception of God, conflict with any antagonizing ideas in the form of tradition, law, custom, or their human representatives, was inevitable. Our portrait would be incomplete if we failed to view the conflict between Jesus and the Jews which fascinates the onlooker as it gains momentum and draws the Master to his death.

Jesus first became entangled with the scribes when he spoke to the paralytic in Capernaum, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." They clashed again when Jesus ate with Levi, a tax collector whom the scribes classed with "the publicans and sinners." The disciples of John and the pharisees objected to the irregular fast days which Jesus' disciples kept. Another serious offense, in the eyes of the scribes, was the failure of Jesus and his disciples to keep the Sabbath according to the law: The disciples plucked grain from the field; and Jesus

healed a "withered" hand in the synagogue. Jesus, with his depth of love for suffering humanity could not endure the narrow bonds of pharisaic customs and laws. The sabbath and laws were made for man and not man for them. Whatever interfered with the well-being of man and his sonship with God, must go. Jesus valued human personality too much to tolerate any warping or disfiguring of it by cramming it into cold molds of formalism and the narrow limits of powerless laws.

The desecration of the temple and Jesus' active protest only put more fuel on the already hot fire. The confusion and noise caused by merchants selling their wares in the court was not conducive to worship. The added cheating and robbing of travelers aroused Jesus' wrath to white heat. So he drove the money changers, animal and dove dealers from the temple. His opponents were furious but were helpless in the face of the true facts and in the presence of the sympathizing crowd. They tried subtle ways of trapping Jesus. Young men were sent to entangle Jesus by asking a catch question, "Is it lawful to pay the poll tax to the Emperor?" but they failed. The Sadducees tried to implicate Jesus by giving him an hypothetical nut to crack--a problem related to the resurrection--but they were outwitted.

The final blow was struck when Jesus, desiring to lay before the people the bare facts of evil practiced by the scribes and those sitting in the "high seats," openly denounced

his opponents with "Beware of the scribes." This conflict, so real and full of human pathos and tragedy, was brought to a premature end by an underhanded betrayal.

Insight into the self-consciousness of Jesus helps us to gain a more adequate conception of the Synoptic Jesus. From all dependable evidence it would appear that the self-consciousness of Jesus was a gradual growth. It seems impossible to conceive him as knowing from early childhood his uniqueness and being able to tell in advance the entire course and events of his life. The twelve-year-old child's retort to his parents hardly seems to contain all that some read into it.

Jesus, in a large measure, was a product of his people's life, customs and scriptures. He knew of the messianic and kingdom expectations. When he aligned himself with John the Baptist--in the impressive atmosphere of the baptismal scene, and the ringing challenge of "the kingdom of heaven is at hand"--a question must have arisen in the mind of Jesus, "Why don't you do something about these conditions, these times, and help usher in the Kingdom?" The writer is inclined to believe that this conviction of a "Call" contributed much to the realization of Jesus' self-consciousness.

We have already construed the "Transfiguration." In this personal experience of Jesus, there seems to be evidence for the growth in his self-consciousness. One can infer from Jesus' thoughts and meditation on Moses and Elijah, that within

him was the growing conviction that his purposes, life and spirit were closely akin to theirs and, if he followed in their footsteps, he couldn't expect anything less than their fate.

The occasion of Peter's confession possibly gives us the best insight into the awakening thought of Jesus. It seems that the significance of his task gradually dawns upon the Master and he sees the vast gulf between the disciples' conception of his messiahship and his own convictions. As he comes to a fuller realization of what the end might be, Jesus questions his disciples with "Who do people, and who do ye say that I am?" Thus he prepares them for what has slowly dawned upon him.

A Messiah? Yes. It is a conviction. But what kind of a Messiah? Our portrait reveals to us a Messiah who lived and taught in Palestine; who received a call while attending one of John the Baptist's "Kingdom revivals;" who spent nearly six weeks in the wilderness resolving problems related to God, himself, and the Kingdom; who "was in all parts tempted like as we are;" who met momentous issues arising from real situations; who was in a fatal conflict with men of his time; and upon whom gradually dawned the consciousness that he was the kind of Messiah who must give his life for the Kingdom's cause, if obedience and loyalty to his Father's will demanded it.

Chapter IX

CONCLUSION

A Digest

In the long controversy over the Historicity of Jesus we found not a few opponents. The influence of the line of men had its peaks and its valleys. H. Reimarus probably led the attack when he refused to recognize the founder-relationship of Jesus. The advance of Reinhard, Herder, Volney, Depuis, Bahrdt and Paulus, did not cause any serious alarm. Then David Strauss in 1836 fired the first shot which echoed and reechoed in the halls of traditional dogmatism. In the lull that followed, such men as B. Bauer, Renan, Holtzmann, Weizsäcker, Keim, Schenkel, Hase, B. Weiss, and W. Wrede, led the field. Kalthoff and Jensen introduced their widely divergent theories in the first decade of the present century. Among the outstanding opponents today are J. M. Robertson, William Smith, and Arthur Drews.

We found, in Chapters II and III, that the six significant opponents were most vicious in their attack on the Historicity of Jesus. The life of Jesus was dubbed by Bauer as a "Literary Invention;" by Kalthoff, as a creation of the early community--a mirror of its own life of persecution and martyrdom; by Jensen, as a repetition of parallel incidents

in the Gilgamesch Epic. Robertson saw in Jesus only the lengthened shadow of Mithraism; Smith, a primitive cult god who was worshipped as the watcher, protector, and savior, by the Jewish sect of Nazarenes and the Naasseni Gnostics; and Drews, a "Messiah"--the product of "syncretized Judaism," the sects of which had been influenced by the Persian Mithras, Babylonian Marduk, and other Indian mysteries.

In chapter IV, it was seen that these opponents use many modes of attack on the positive evidence. They attempt to destroy any contribution from extra-biblical evidence by their arguments from silence, sparsity of details, and interpolations (in whole or in part) of later Christians. In their effort to undermine the historical value of Pauline evidence, these men question the existence of Paul--making him a product of the early community's imagination. The arguments from silence and later interpolation are again introduced; the letters are labeled "Theological documents;" and, upon their own interpretation of several scriptural passages, the knowledge of only an ideal spiritual Christ is credited Paul. In their attack upon the Synoptic evidence, the opponents grant the Gospels only a religious purpose; relegate them to a much later date than is commonly accepted by historical criticism; deny their historical value because of sparsity of details, lack of coherence and the "second-hand" nature of their material; and because of the presence of "miracles" and the resulting problem of separating the real from the unreal, refuse to see in the

Synoptics an historical core.

Against the attacks of the opponents of the Historicity of Jesus we presented the evidences of the positive argument. It was seen that, while Christian writers of the extra-biblical evidence reflect the contemporary Christian tradition, both in its historical and in its interpretative characteristics, they are confident of Jesus' existence and authority. There are few details in regard to the life of Jesus found in the Hebrew sources, yet two passages in the Antiquities do testify to the existence of Jesus, and the Talmund and The Tol'doth Yeshu, with their manufactured legends and stories, can be accounted for only by an effective, strong personality who was a living threat to the Jews' narrow, self-contained legalism. The Roman writers also point to a living person, Jesus, who was closely related and, indeed, was the founder of Christianity.

It has been shown that the genuineness and authorship of the Pauline evidence--Galatians, I and II Corinthians, and Romans--are no longer doubted by historical criticism. Both the external and internal evidence validate the authenticity of these letters. The historical value of these letters is unquestionable. They were written to meet particular needs and problems in particular churches. Although Paul does not present a coherent view of the life of Jesus and his allusions to the Gospel History are few, a close examination of his "four" letters reveals a very definite knowledge and understanding of the Jesus of History.

Although our study of the composition of the Synoptics showed them not to be originals in total, they probably are in part. These "parts" date so near to the historical fact and person of Jesus, that it is practically impossible to conceive of the books as fictitious in their entirety. External evidence assures us that the Gospels were in existence before the close of the second century. The very absence of apparent labeling within the Synoptics speaks for an early date. Although the writers' purpose was religious, their exhibitions were taken from the daily acts and sayings of the Historic Jesus. The presence of mythical elements does not prove that the entire tradition had from its beginnings an exclusively mythical character. The significant thing is that, to later reflection, the qualities of character and personality which Jesus displayed through his teaching and living during his earthly ministry, made possible and substantiated the birth and resurrection stories and any elements of mythical character. Our Synoptic Portrait reveals the kind of Messiah who lived and taught in Galilee and Judaea, among his countrymen, the Jews. He had a definite career. He was put to death because of what he said and did.

An Evaluation

James Mackinnon gives to us a most notable statement of Jesus' significance for historic and present Christianity. With it we conclude.

> "Without the historic Jesus there would have been no Christianity and no Church to found. Both owe their existence to the historic personality, the historic mission, the death and resurrection of a real, a concrete being.....Jesus is not a creation of the religious consciousness of others, but the creator of a religion out of the matrix of his own personality. He was, we may say, the highest product of his race, but he was far more than the mere product of his time. What we have in this sublime, yet real Synoptic figure is not a mere reflection of a mystery cult, or of the personification of certain ideas, or of the meditation of his disciples, but a creative personality who in himself is greater than the Gospel which he enunciates and exemplifies in an ideal life.....The wonderful power of this personality is not circumscribed by the short span of his actual existence on earth. It has made itself felt in the hearts and lives of successive generations of his followers, appealing to the souls of men with a perennial force, inspiring, uplifting, illuminating, and directing them in their aspiration after God and the highest good, and verifying itself in the moral and spiritual progress of humanity."(1)

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(1) James Mackinnon, The Historic Jesus, pp. 396-7.

A Poem

"I cannot put His presence by, I meet Him everywhere;
I meet Him in the country town, the busy market square;
The Mansion and the Tenement attest His presence there.
Upon the funnelled ships at sea He sets His shining feet;
The distant ends of empire not in vain His name repeat---
And, like the presence of the rose,
He makes the whole world sweet.

"He comes to break the barriers down raised up by
barren creeds;
About the globe from zone to zone, like sunlight
He proceeds;
He comes to give the World's starved heart the
perfect love it needs---
The Christ, Whose friends have played Him false,
Whom dogmas have belied,
Still speaking to the hearts of men---
tho' shamed and crucified,
The Master of the centuries Who will not be denied."(2)

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(2)Harry Kemp, The Presence.

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